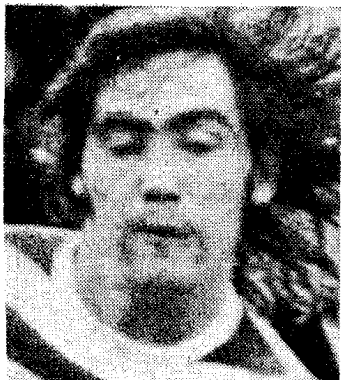


F.A. Cup Second Round Wycombe Wanderers 1, Reading 2

By SHANE McGARVEY

Two mistakes by Wycombe Wanderers and the width of a goalpost kept third division Reading in the F.A. Cup on Saturday.

Robin Friday grabbed the lead for the full-timers after just five minutes, consolidated the lead after half-an-hour and then floundered with the rest of his team-mates as the Blues launched a fight back worthy of any cup tie.



Robin Friday — his two goals put Wycombe out of the FA Cup.

But Wycombe have only themselves to blame for losing this one. For much of the second half Reading weren't even in the same class, but prior to the interval Wanderers showed no desire to join the Football League giants in the third round.

Reading snatched the lead following a free kick just inside their own half. The ball came into the Blues' penalty area, Murray got a touch and Friday took advantage of a lapse in Wycombe's concentration to rifle the ball home.

It was his sixth goal of the season and it wasn't to be long before he scored his seventh. But first Friday collected his third booking of the season for a late tackle on Mick Holifield.



The goal had the required effect on Wycombe. Ian Pearson had a shot blocked and Alan Phillips, who scored the goal that put Hendon through at the expense of Reading a year ago, came close twice in two minutes.

His first attempt was a volley that went wide in the 16th minute and then he headed off target following a free kick on the right.

In the 32nd minute Friday must have thought the issue was beyond doubt when he pounced again to score. Murray battled his way into the Wycombe danger zone and sent in a fierce shot from the left. John Maskell dived full length but could only get a hand to it and as Phillips tried to push it back into his 'keeper's arms in came Friday to knock the ball home.



The Blues had a chance to pull one goal back a minute from the interval when John Priestly drove a shot just past the post and as FIFA referee John Holmewood blew his whistle to signal half time, Reading must have been fairly confident of their third round place.

That confidence vanished in the second half. Reading

were outplayed and one assessment of their 'keeper Steve Death as man of the match wasn't far wrong.

He alone was responsible for the third division club hanging on to their first half lead as he thwarted attempts from Bobby Davies, Pearson, Dylan Evans and Birdseye in the first 20 minutes after the interval.

But not even Death could hold out forever against the Wycombe challenge. The Wanderers' supporters, who had fallen silent long before half-time, realised that all was not lost and were in full cry once more.



Their noise was as much responsible for Reading's collapse as their heroes' cavalier football and when Pearson smashed the ball into the right-hand corner of goal in the 69th minute the chanting took off to a deafening crescendo.

But bad luck dogged the Blues as they went all out for the equaliser. In the 82nd minute Death foiled them with an acrobatic save from Kennedy after being wrong-footed and three minutes later watched as Kennedy's shot flashed past the post from 25 yards.

Phillips put another shot wide with four minutes left and Pearson missed a replay by three inches when he crashed a shot against the upright with seconds to go.

